

Barth Society will meet in Atlanta November 20-22, 2015

Our meeting in Atlanta in conjunction with the AAR will feature a Friday afternoon session from 3:30 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. and a Saturday morning session from 9:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. The presenters for the Friday afternoon session will be Jinhyok Kim, Torch Trinity Graduate University, Seoul, S. Korea, whose lecture is entitled: "*Karl Barth's Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*" and Andrea C. White, Union Theological Seminary, New York City, whose lecture is entitled: "*The Political Theology of Karl Barth: Why a Womanist Theologian Should Care.*" This session is listed as P20-217 in the AAR program and will be held in Marriott-M301-302 (Marquis Level). George Hunsinger, Princeton Theological Seminary will preside. The Saturday morning session will be held in Marriott-L401-403 (Lobby Level) and is listed in the AAR program as P21-104. This session will feature a Book Panel: Kevin Diller, Taylor University, Upland, Indiana will present a paper entitled *Barth and Rationality according to D. Paul La Montagne* and D. Paul La Montagne, Presbytery of New Brunswick, New Jersey will present a paper entitled *Theology's Epistemological Dilemma according to Kevin Diller*. Garrett Green, Connecticut College and George Hunsinger, Princeton Theological Seminary will preside. In addition to these sessions, the Karl Barth Society of North America will feature a Sunday morning session this year from 9:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. which will be held in Hilton—Grand Salon C (Level 2) and is listed as P22-107 in the AAR program. The theme of this session is: *Theological Theology—Engagements with the Work of John Webster*. A distinguished panel will discuss various aspects of John Webster's theology which advocates a more theological theology, that is, a theology that focuses on its own unique subject, God and all things in relation to God, and allows its methods to bear witness to these realities. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois will present a paper entitled "*Exegesis I know, and Theology I know, but who are you? Acts 19 and the Theological Interpretation of Scripture*;" Katherine Sonderegger, Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, Virginia, will present a paper entitled "*The Sinlessness of Christ*;" and Francis Watson, Durham University, Durham, UK will present a paper entitled "*Does Historical Criticism Exist? A Contribution to Debate on the Theological Interpretation of Scripture.*" Darren Sarisky, Oxford University, UK will present John Webster's response. R. David Nelson, Baker Academic & Brazos Press will preside. Readers might be interested in knowing that these papers along with nineteen others can be read in *Theological Theology: Essays in Honour of John Webster*, ed. R. David Nelson, Darren Sarisky and Justin Stratis, (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2015).

The Board will meet for breakfast on Monday morning November 23

It would be appreciated if those Board Members who are present would make their availability for the meeting known to the Editor who will then arrange the time and place of the meeting with them.

The Tenth Annual Barth Conference was held at **Princeton Theological Seminary** June 21-24, 2015. This Conference was entitled: “Karl Barth and the Gospels: Interpreting Gospel Texts” and was co-sponsored by *The Center for Barth Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary* and the *Karl Barth Society of North America*.

Coverage of the Conference Provided by

Sara Misgen of **Princeton Theological Seminary**

Over 230 people gathered at Princeton Theological Seminary to attend the 2015 Annual Karl Barth Conference: “Karl Barth and the Gospels: Interpreting Gospel Texts.” Participants from around the world gathered to hear nine plenary lectures, a panel, and concurrent sessions centered on questions of hermeneutics, theological exegesis, and some of Barth’s central theological convictions. This was the largest Barth conference to date, and it provided ample opportunity for participants to delve into the central themes of Barth’s theology.

The Conference began with a banquet on Sunday night, with Professor **Daniel Migliore**, Chair of this year’s conference, giving opening remarks. After the banquet, participants gathered in Miller Chapel to hear Professor **Jürgen Moltmann** of **Tübingen** give a lecture entitled “**Predestination: Karl Barth’s Doctrine of the Election of Grace**.” The Rev. Dr. **M. Craig Barnes**, President of PTS, introduced Professor Moltmann and presented him with an honorary gift, a painting by artist Makato Fujimara. Fujimara was there to unveil the artwork and offer an explanation of its significance as a symbol of hope. Professor Moltmann noted that he has been a champion of Barth’s Christological reconstruction of election since it was first published, and offered

a lecture that largely praised Barth’s doctrine. In particular, Moltmann noted that Barth’s doctrine of election overcomes the divide between believers and unbelievers, bringing the proclamation of the Gospel to the forefront.

In his concluding remarks, Moltmann offered two criticisms of Barth. First, he suggested that Barth’s formulation of God as the one who loves in freedom is a needless tautology, for freedom can exist only in loving relationship. Secondly, he suggested that discussions of election must begin not with God’s will, but with God’s nature, for God’s nature determines God’s actions. After his lecture, Professor Moltmann graciously answered questions from the audience on a variety of themes, before the conference closed for the evening.

Monday’s activities began with breakfast and a lecture by Dr. **Eric Gregory**, Professor of Religion at **Princeton University**, entitled “**The Gospel within the Commandment: Karl Barth on the Parable of the Good Samaritan**.” Dr. Gregory began by noting that Barth is not read much in Christian ethics, even with the contributions of recent work trying to change that. However, love is a major theme in Christian ethics, and Gregory suggests that Barth, and his reading of the parable of the Good Samaritan in Paragraph 18 of the *Church*

Dogmatics, can offer ethics a great deal on this topic. As Barth reads the parable, he reads it against Augustine's call for self-love entwined with neighbor-love, and instead suggests that love is an event, the particular solidarity of God with humanity. Love as exemplified in the story of the Good Samaritan is not a theory, and is not based on some generic notion of common humanity—this common humanity, in Barth's estimation, has been destroyed in the Fall. Neighbor love cannot be understood apart from the revelation of the divine command, and thus is a gift of grace. The love commanded by God and illustrated by the parable is grace; Barth also expands this to indicate that loving one's neighbor is to participate in the act of Justification; the parable is an earthly enactment of the Gospel. Along this line, the true neighbor is not the one who evokes our compassion or pity and excites our sympathies, but is the one you wish to deny.

In conclusion, Dr. Gregory offered some implications of Barth's theology for Christian Humanitarian aid. He finds Barth's contribution to be primarily pastoral—Barth indicates that the patient, confident love of neighbor commanded by God is difficult, but also gives hope for living a life of gratuity, participating in Justification through neighbor love.

Following Dr. Gregory's lecture, Professors Migliore and Moltmann joined him onstage for a panel discussion of Professor Gregory's paper. The discussion opened into a time of Q&A with Professor Moltmann, and ended with Moltmann reading a statement on his friendship with Kelly Gissendaner and a critique of the American Penal Justice system.

After a short coffee break, Dr. **Willie Jennings**, now of **Yale University**, spoke on "**Karl Barth and the Story of the Rich Young Ruler**." Jennings noted that the work of the Christian is to change the social, political, and economic equations in which people live; and he used that charge to organize his discussion of Barth's exegesis of the Rich Young Man

from *CD II/2*, paragraph 37. Jennings argued that one must understand Barth's statements in light of the context in which he wrote them: 1941 Switzerland stood at the center of significant flows of money between both Allied powers and Axis ones, and stood to profit greatly from the war. In addition, Switzerland was a site where many Jewish individuals attempted to gain refuge from persecution and were turned away at the border. Jennings highlighted the fact that in this way, 1941 was remarkably similar to 2015: some lives seem not to matter.

Along with Barth, Jennings read the rich young man as a fully formed religious subject, who completes the right action when meeting the Messiah. However, his words "what must I do to be saved?" reveal a masculine attempt at self-sufficiency, which Jennings noted takes its most pernicious form in the attempt to master. The problem of the rich young ruler was his attempt to master salvation instead of receiving it; Jennings suggests that Barth did not go far enough in grasping the wider political and colonial implications of this interaction. In telling the rich man to sell all he has, Jesus exposes how formation of this man—which has strong resonances with the white, Christian, and masculine formation of power of Western Christianity—prevents him from obeying God. By leaving and going away, the man reveals that he is ruled by Mammon, not by God. In conclusion, Jennings follows Barth by noting that Jesus looks at the rich young man through the disciples, comparing their obedience to his disobedience. At the same time, Peter's anxiety about when he will be rewarded for his obedience reveals that he is operating within the rich man's anxiety. With Barth, Jennings notes that the command of God unmasks these interests, and invites us to participate in the process of re-formation.

Lunch was served in the Mackay campus center, and was followed by worship. The Rev. **Fleming Rutledge** preached a sermon entitled "**What's in Those Lamps?**" based around the parable of the 10 Bridesmaids from Matthew

25:1-12. Paul Dafydd Jones, Associate Professor at the **University of Virginia**, spoke next on “**The Riddle of Gethsemane**.” Jones began by describing Calvin’s and Schleiermacher’s respective treatments of Gethsemane, illustrating the ways in which their theological commitments prevent them from dealing with the details of the synoptic accounts.

Moving then to Barth, Jones highlighted the great amount of innovation present in §59. On this account, Christ in Gethsemane exchanges his mode of activity from one in which he sets the term for others to one in which others set the terms for him—this action is the meaning of his passion. Jones identified four key aspects of Barth’s exegesis of Gethsemane:

1. When he begins to pray, Jesus does not know exactly what the Father requires of him. Focusing on the disquieting accounts of Matthew and Mark, Barth centers on the way that the Son determines to make our situation his own, so much so that he is frightened at the prospect of bearing the sins of the world.
2. Barth notes that Jesus receives no sign or response from God, except that of Gethsemane itself. What Gethsemane reveals is that human beings, left to their own devices and overcome by sin, can only rebel against God. At this point, Jones notes that there is a “riddle”: in Golgotha, the will of God and the will of Satan are one.
3. In the power of his prayer, Jesus commits to being the one who will endure the power of evil in its sharpest form. When Jesus drinks the cup, he commits to becoming, and in death being, the total fact of sin that opposes God in order that it may be eradicated (cf. *CD* IV/1, 254-55).

4. In conclusion, Jones raises the question of the experience of Golgotha for Christ. Noting that Barth does not answer such a question within the *CD*, Jones questioned whether Jesus thought of the passion he was about to undertake as the middle of a drama to be followed by the triumph of Easter, or whether Jesus truly experienced it as the ultimate end of his life, after which he would have no future. He argues that along Barthian lines, one may say that Jesus Christ experienced the cross, knowing that it would in some way aid in the reconciliation of the world to God, but without hope of resurrection.

For the second year, concurrent sessions were offered in the afternoon, and six scholars from around the world offered additional reflections on Barth’s theology. They were:

Gillian Breckenridge, University of Virginia
Carsten Card-Hyatt, University of Saint Andrews

Marjorie Corbman, Fordham University
Andrea McDougall, University of Otago, New Zealand

Paul Nimmo, University of Aberdeen
Derek Woodard-Lehman, Lutheran Theological Seminary

After a break for dinner in the Mackay campus center, the evening’s plenary was given by Dr. Karlfried Froehlich, Professor Emeritus at **Princeton Theological Seminary**, who spoke on “**The Isenheim Altarpiece: Art & Theology**.” Froehlich contextualized the piece within the crisis of the plague and ergotism in Europe, and took audience members through the symbolism in all three views of the altarpiece. He then turned to Barth’s interaction with the altarpiece, addressing Barth’s comments on the figure of John, but also the centrality of Christ in the altarpiece’s message.

Professor Froehlich's lecture was a well-received end to the first full day of conference activities.

Tuesday morning began with a lecture by Professor **Bruce McCormack**, Charles Hodge Professor of Systematic Theology at **Princeton Theological Seminary**, who offered an interpretation of Karl Barth and the Cry of Abandonment, entitled "The Passion of God Himself." McCormack began his lecture with an explanation of *The Gospel of Jesus Christ* by José Saramago, who offers an eloquent expression of protest atheism. His lecture aimed to use Barth's reading of the cry of dereliction in order to offer an answer to the questions of protest atheism.

In his discussions of the cross, McCormack noted that Barth rejects the possibility of a reading of the cross which pits God against God, be that in a Hegelian or social Trinitarian framework. That is to say, the Subject of the cry of dereliction is neither a mere human (who is directly identified with the second person of the Trinity) nor an *independent* (metaphysically rather than Christologically-grounded) *Logos asarkos*. The Subject who utters the cry is the God-human in his divine-human unity (the Logos as human). The unresolved problem which McCormack attempts to solve by moving beyond Barth is that of explaining how separation can be real and yet not threaten the unity of the Godhead. A way forward to an answer begins with seeing death in God-abandonment as resulting from the departure of the Spirit from the human consciousness of Jesus—a profoundly human experience which is taken up into the being of the triune God by means of an essential receptivity of the Logos in relation to His human nature which grounds and preserves the unity of person. This provisional answer is then made more complete by means of a Trinitarian reflection. That the triune God should not be overcome by "taking up" into Himself the human experience of death in God-abandonment is due to the inexhaustible richness and power of a Subject who exists not only in the mode of the Son but

also in the modes of Father and Spirit. In any event, no answer to protest atheism can begin to be adequate which does not understand God as the experiencing Subject of suffering and death.

Beverley Gaventa, Distinguished Professor of New Testament Interpretation at **Baylor University**, spoke next on Barth's reading of the Road to Emmaus from *CD III/2*. Gaventa followed Barth's reading of the story step-by-step in order to illustrate how Barth's exegesis of the passage is both academically sound and provocative within the history of Luke/Acts Scholarship. Barth's discussion of the Emmaus Road is located in his reflections on time, and he uses the story as evidence of his argument that Jesus is the acting subject in bridging His past and our present.

Focusing on Barth's comment that the Emmaus road account is "an indispensable commentary" on all other Easter narratives, Gaventa argued that Barth presents a better reading of time than do major scholars of Luke-Acts, especially since the work of Hans Conzelmann. In addition, Gaventa suggested that Barth's use of the Emmaus Road story as the key to all other resurrection accounts, and the books of Luke and Acts, is a model that scholars should currently follow in their exegesis.

By emphasizing the Emmaus Road story as the key to Luke/Acts, Gaventa suggests that Barth's reading pushes against a major strand of Acts interpretation that finds Jesus absent from the book of Acts. With Barth, Gaventa emphasized that the book of Acts is about Jesus. In conclusion, Gaventa offered implications of using the Emmaus Road account as the key for our readings of Luke/Acts. First, she suggested that caring about the Church depends on our understanding of who is in charge of it. The disciples are identified with the risen Lord, claiming them as Jesus'. Secondly, the disciples in the story initially speak of Jesus in the past tense, but come to the realization that the testimony they received from the women at the tomb was reliable, and

that the crucified Jesus is the Lord of history. Furthermore, the crucified Jesus is also Lord of our ways of thinking about one another, and the crucified and risen Lord reveals the identity of humanity in its fullness. Gaventa suggested that the implications of this reality are unlimited, encompassing race, gender, age, religion, sexuality, ability, and so on.

In the afternoon, Dr. **Richard Bauckham** offered a lecture on “**Karl Barth’s Interpretation of John 1.**” Dr. Bauckham focused on Barth’s 1925-1926 lectures on John and compared them to the exegesis of the passage in the *Church Dogmatics*. Bauckham focused on assessing Barth’s exegesis from his perspective as a New Testament scholar, and held him to the standards of contemporary exegetical work. In verses 1 and 2 of John 1, Barth treats the term Λόγος as a placeholder for the term Jesus Christ, which is supplied in verse 17, and this does not change across Barth’s exegesis of the passage. The explanation of verses 3-4 do change significantly with the writing of the *Church Dogmatics*, because Barth is concerned there to prevent any notion of a *logos asarkos*, a concern that was not as prevalent in his early lectures on John. In turning to verse 14, Bauckham noted that Barth uses it to say that the whole prologue, with the exception of verse 1, is also applicable to the man Jesus.

In conclusion, Bauckham noted that he is in broad agreement with Barth’s general approach to exegesis, but offered three points of salient criticism. First, Bauckham notes that Barth gives hardly any attention to the parallels between John 1:1-5 and the opening of the book of Genesis. By treating Λόγος as a placeholder, Barth misses the Christological content of the term, and the passage’s suggestion that the Word who created the world has become flesh in Jesus Christ. Secondly, Barth’s reading of the preposition Οὗτος in the second verse is, in Bauckham’s estimation, “linguistically impossible,” because the Johannine use of the term occurs primarily to refer backward, not forward as Barth suggests,

and when it does refer forwards, its referent immediately follows it. Thirdly, Barth’s explanation of Λόγος as a mere placeholder for Jesus Christ misses the passage’s emphasis on the μονογενοῦς in verses 14-18, and so misses much of what the passage is saying about the incarnation. Because of this, Bauckham suggested that Barth completely misses the central point of the prologue.

The afternoon also featured another concurrent session, with additional papers offered from young scholars. They were:

Kendall Cox, University of Virginia

Tyler Frick, University of Aberdeen

David Hunsicker Jr., Fuller Theological Seminary

J. Scott Jackson, Independent Scholar

Adrian Langdon, Laurentian University

Ry Siggelkow, Princeton Theological Seminary

Shannon Smythe, Princeton Theological Seminary

After dinner, conference participants were able to take optional tours of the newly renovated Center for Barth Studies in the Library’s North Wing. An evening reception was held in the library’s Iain R. Torrance atrium, which featured snacks, wine, a string quartet, and a photo display containing items from the Barth Archiv in Basel. The quartet played an all-Mozart program in honor of Barth’s favorite composer and participants happily enjoyed the time to chat, relax, and view the photographs.

The final day of the Conference began with a lecture by Professor **Daniel Migliore**, Charles Hodge Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology at **Princeton Theological Seminary**, entitled “**Barth, Balthasar, and the Parable of the Lost Son.**” Prof. Migliore contrasted Barth’s reading of the Parable of the Lost Son in CD IV/1, §59 and IV/2, §64 with Balthasar’s shorter reflections on it found in the *Theo-Drama*. In this, Migliore sought to show how

their respective treatments of the parable served as little summaries of their massive and magisterial theological works. Barth emphasized that the parable was analogical, not allegorical, with its content describing what God is and what God does. For Balthasar, the Parable is an analogy of the kenosis that occurs in the life of the Trinity when the Son is begotten of the Father. Both are firmly within the Nicene tradition, and do more than re-state that tradition, but where Balthasar starts with Trinitarianism, Barth begins with Christology. As a result, Migliore suggested that on this point, Barth's reading of the parable is less speculative.

However, Migliore suggested that Barth fails to give proper attention to the role of the Father in the parable by focusing almost exclusively on the Son. In his emphasis on the Son, Barth was attempting to correct a tradition of interpretation—such as that of Gollwitzer—which focused almost exclusively on the Father. On this point, Migliore argues that Barth goes too far, and Balthasar offers a valuable counterpart to Barth's exegesis in his focus on the Father. In conclusion, Migliore argued that the way each interprets the parable reveals his ideas about the prospect of universal salvation. Looking at the older son, for Balthasar the question remains open because the older Son remains completely free—this rules out any guarantee of human salvation. However, for Barth the question remains open not because of a voluntaristic conception of freedom, but because human freedom can only ever occur in Christ. Universal salvation remains an open possibility because God's grace cannot be controlled or understood.

As a conclusion to the conference, Professors Gregory, Jones, McCormack, Migliore, Bauckham, and Gaventa sat on a panel and answered questions from the audience about themes and issues raised in the conference. Following lunch in Mackay center, participants either stayed for the Karl Barth Pastor's Conference or headed home with plenty to think about. We are grateful for the success of

this conference, and look forward to 2016's Conference on "Karl Barth, Pneumatology, and the Global Pentecostal movement."

Check the Center for Barth Studies website at <http://libweb.ptsem.eu/collections/barth> for further details, updates, book reviews, and other information about the latest in Barth studies.

Announcement

A book entitled *Correlating Sobornost: Conversations between Karl Barth and the Russian Orthodox Tradition*, edited by Ashley John Moyse, Scott A. Kirkland and John C. McDowell is scheduled to be published by Fortress Press in 2016. Scott Kirkland provided the description of the work below for those who may be interested.

The diaspora of scholars exiled from Russia in 1922 offered something vital for both Russian Orthodoxy and for ecumenical dialogue. Liberated from scholastic academic discourse, and living and writing in new languages, the scholars set out to reinterpret their traditions and to introduce Russian Orthodoxy to the West. Yet, relatively few have considered the works of these exiles, particularly insofar as they act as critical and constructive conversation partners. This project expands upon the relatively limited conversation between such thinkers with the most significant Protestant theologian of the last century, Karl Barth. Through the topic and in the spirit of sobornost, this project inaugurates such conversation. The body of Russian theological scholarship guided by sobornost challenges Barth, helping us to draw out necessary criticism while leading us toward unexpected insight, and vice versa. This collection will not only illuminate but also stimulate interesting and important discussions for those engaged in the study of Karl Barth's corpus, in the Orthodox tradition, and in the ecumenical discourse between East and West.

The Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship will meet on Friday afternoon, November 20 in Hyatt-Hanover D (Exhibit Level) from 1 P.M. to 4 P.M. W. Travis McMaken, Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Missouri will be this year's speaker. His topic is: "*Actualism, Dualism, and Onto-Relations: Interrogating Torrance's Criticism of Barth's Doctrine of Baptism.*" This is listed as P20-212 in the AAR booklet.

A Message from the President
Fall 2015

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I am writing once again to ask if you would kindly pay your dues to our Society. Although our needs are modest, we do depend entirely on your financial support for various expenses and projects, including the charges we incur for the use of rooms and facilities at the AAR annual meeting.

In recent years we have made strides in reaching out to younger scholars, women and minorities, even as we have also diversified the composition of our Advisory Board. I expect this trend to continue as we seek to provide top-quality programs in theology for our participants. We have earned a strong reputation as a place where serious theology can be discussed at the AAR.

After unforeseen delays, stretching over several years, I am happy to be able to announce that it is now possible for you to make your contributions to us through the online payment mechanism noted on this page. Please take a moment to do this, so that we can cover our expenses for this year. Alternatively, please consider writing a check.

I am grateful to those who have already done so and would encourage the rest of you please to help us out.

Sincerely,
George Hunsinger

Program of Interest to Barth Society
Members

The Evangelical Theological Society will hold a session on The Theology of Karl Barth: Barth's Pneumatology: A Panel on Christopher Holmes' *The Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2015) from 1:00 P.M. to 4:10 P.M. on Thursday, November 19 in **Room 205** of the **Atlanta Hilton**.

ANNUAL BARTH SOCIETY DUES

NOTE: NEW DUES PAYMENT OPTION

Everyone interested in joining the Karl Barth Society of North America is invited to become a member by renewing or purchasing their membership at: <http://kbsna.kbarth.org/>

Alternatively, you may send your name, address (including email address) and annual dues of \$25.00 (\$15.00 for students) to:

Professor Paul D. Molnar
Editor, KBSNA Newsletter
Department of Theology
and Religious Studies
St. John Hall
St. John's University
8000 Utopia Parkway
Queens, New York 11439
Email: molnarp@stjohns.edu

Checks drawn on a U.S. bank should be made payable to the **Karl Barth Society of North America**

Your annual dues enable the KBSNA to help underwrite the annual Karl Barth Conference and to attract key-note speakers for that conference and for our fall meeting. The KBSNA thanks all who have paid their dues for this year.